

Replacement of Bridge on MD 261 (Bayside Road) over Fishing Creek

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act- *Adverse Effect on a Historic Bridge*

MD 261 over Fishing Creek in Calvert County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is considering the replacement of SHA Bridge No. 4011 on MD 261 over Fishing Creek in Calvert County. Bridge No. 4011 was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the Historic Bridge Inventory on April 3, 2001. Dating from 1940, it is a significant example of unique engineering and architectural features which include ornamental railings and concrete balusters.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROJECT

Why is this work necessary and what improvements are proposed?

The purpose and need for the proposed project is to replace the deteriorating bridge, improve the opening beneath the bridge, and increase the width of the bridge to provide a safer traveled area. The proposed work will include removing the entire existing structure, construction of new abutments and composite superstructure with pre-stressed bulb tee girders, and approach roadway work that is required to both widen the bridge, raise the vertical profile, and maintain traffic during the three stages of construction. A turning lane will also be added at the Mears Avenue intersection.

Why are comments being requested?

According to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA; Public Law 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), SHA must provide an opportunity for the public to examine the results of the agency's effort to identify historic properties, evaluate their significance and assess the undertaking's effects upon them.

What are the adverse impacts to the Historic Bridge?

The proposed bridge replacement has been considered an adverse impact according to the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Other alternatives to the bridge replacement have been evaluated and determined to be not feasible or prudent, and therefore mitigation measures have been developed. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), identifying mitigation measures to offset the project's adverse effects to the historic bridge, has been developed in cooperation with MHT. These measures include providing updated photographic recordation, interpretive signing installation, and also providing the Town of Chesapeake Beach Public Works Department the opportunity to re-use salvaged components of the bridge, including the metal railing that is a character-defining feature of the bridge. The public is requested to provide comments on this finding.

